

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 270837Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2406

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STADIS////////////////////////////////

FOR NEA/EX

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LE, ASEC, ATRN, APER

1. NOW THAT SECURITY HAS BEGUN TO RETURN TO LEBANON IN GENERAL AND TO BEIRUT IN PARTICULAR, WE HAVE BEEN GIVING THOUGHT TO HOW AND WHEN THIS EMBASSY SHOULD BE RESTAFFED IN ORDER TO PERMIT IT TO RESUME SOME BASIC EMBASSY FUNCTIONS AND TO FULFILL THE SPECIAL ROLE IT WILL BE CALLED UPON TO PLAY IN CONNECTION WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE US ROLE IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF LEBANON. PARA 2 BELOW CONTAINS OUR THOUGHTS ON THIS EMBASSY'S MOST IMMEDIATE NEEDS. IN DRAWING UP THIS SCHEDULE, WE HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THREE FACTORS:

A. SECURITY -- EVEN THOUGH THE ASF HAS EFFECTIVELY TAKEN CONTROL AND THERE ARE NO LONGER ROCKETS FALLING IN WEST BEIRUT, THE SECURITY SITUATION REMAINS UNCERTAIN. A RELIABLE AND EFFECTIVE LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE HAS NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED AND LOCAL GANGS HAVE NOT YET BEEN DISARMED. UNTIL THESE STEPS ARE AT LEAST UNDERWAY, WE MUST MOVE CAUTIOUSLY IN ASSIGNING PERSONNEL.

B. PUBLIC UTILITIES -- SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN RESTORING WATER, ELECTRICITY AND TELEPHONE

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SERVICE IN WEST BEIRUT, BUT IT IS LIKELY TO BE SEVERAL

WEEKS BEFORE THESE UTILITIES ARE AVAILABLE ON A REGULAR, RELIABLE BASIS IN ALL APARTMENTS IN WEST BEIRUT WHERE EMBASSY PERSONNEL MAY LIVE. PARTICULARLY DURING THE WINTER MONTHS, IT WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE FOR PERSONNEL TO LIVE OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY UNTIL THESE UTILITIES, INCLUDING HEAT, ARE AVAILABLE.

C. THE MOVING-OUT PROCESS -- AT PRESENT, ALL AMCIT EMBASSY PERSONNEL LIVE IN THE CHANCERY. WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE FSR-7 YELLIN, WHO IS DUE TO ARRIVE IN MID-DECEMBER, AS WELL AS OCCASIONAL TDY VISITORS, BUT ANY ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL WOULD STRAIN OUR FACILITIES. BEFORE NEW PERSONNEL ARE ADDED, THEREFORE, AMERICAN OFFICERS AND STAFF CURRENTLY ASSIGNED TO BEIRUT (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE MARINE GUARD DETACHMENT) SHOULD BE MOVED OUT OF THE CHANCERY TO GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED QUARTERS IN NEARBY APARTMENT BUILDINGS. THIS PROCESS, WHICH INVOLVES REPAINTING SOME APARTMENTS ALREADY UNDER EMBASSY LEASE AND MOVING IN FURNITURE, IS LIKELY TO TAKE AT LEAST A MONTH, AND ASSUMES THAT BOTH THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES CONTINUES TO IMPROVE.

2. EMBASSY IS LOOKING FORWARD TO ARRIVAL OF FSR-7 JAMES YELLIN, WHO IS URGENTLY NEEDED TO ASSIST THE EMBASSY IN A VARIETY OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND AID-RELATED TASKS. IN ADDITION, WE PROPOSE THAT THE FOLLOWING STAFF BE ASSIGNED TO BEIRUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

A. FOUR ADDITIONAL MARINE SECURITY GUARD WATCHSTANDERS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT FOUR ADDITIONAL WATCHSTANDERS ARE NEEDED: 1) TO AUGMENT THE WATCHSTANDING CAPABILITY WITHIN THE EMBASSY; 2) TO PROTECT THE COM'S RESIDENCE; AND 3) TO IMPROVE ACCESS CONTROL TO THE CONSULAR SECTION. WE BELIEVE THE MSG DETACHMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO RESIDE IN THE CHANCERY FOR BOTH SECURITY AND LOGISTICAL REASONS.

B. CONSULAR OFFICER. NOW THAT THE BEIRUT AIRPORT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS OPEN, WE PROPOSE THAT THE VISA SECTION BE OPENED ABOUT JANUARY 1, 1977, FOR THE ISSUANCE OF NIV'S ONLY. (THE IV SECTION SHOULD NOT BE REOPENED UNTIL A LATER DATE.) THIS WILL REQUIRE THE ASSIGNMENT OF A CONSULAR OFFICER SINCE THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, WHO CURRENTLY SUPERVISES THE RESIDUAL CONSULAR FUNCTIONS BEING PERFORMED AT THIS EMBASSY, IS NOT TRAINED IN THIS FIELD AND IS ALREADY CARRYING AN EXTREMELY HEAVY LOAD.

DEPENDING ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION,
THIS OFFICER MAY LIVE IN THE CHANCERY TEMPORARILY AND
SHOULD NOT BE ACCOMPANIED BY DEPENDENTS.

3. THE NEXT PHASE OF THE EMBASSY'S EXPANSION WILL
DEPEND ON CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT OF THE SECURITY
SITUATION, THE VOLUME AND TYPE OF WORK THE EMBASSY IS
RESPONSIBLE FOR, AND THE ASSIGNMENT OF A NEW AMBASSADOR.
IF THE EMBASSY IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE ITS ACTIVITY,
THE FOLLOWING PERSONNEL WILL BE NEEDED IN THE NEXT SIX
MONTHS: FOUR ADDITIONAL MARINES, FOR A TOTAL
COMPLEMENT OF 12 PLUS ONE NCOIC; AN ASSISTANT C&R
OFFICER; A GSO; A B&M OFFICER; AN ECON/COM OFFICER;
ANOTHER AMERICAN SECRETARY; A PAO; AND AN OPERATIONS
COORDINATOR IN THE DAO OFFICE.

4. WE WOULD WELCOME INDICATION OF DEPARTMENT'S
THINKING ON BUILD-UP OF EMBASSY BEIRUT STAFF.
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